

Labor Herald Library
No. 8

Struggle of The Trade Unions Against Fascism

By Andreas Nin

With an Introduction by Earl R. Browder

Price 15 Cents

1923

Published by
The Trade Union Educational League
106 No. La Salle St. Chicago, Ill.



Militants, Notice!

Organize! Join the Trade Union Educational League. This is a system of informal committees throughout the entire union movement, organized to infuse the mass with revolutionary understanding and spirit. It is working for the closer affiliation and solidification of our existing craft unions until they have been developed into industrial unions. Believing that all workers should stand together regardless of their social or other opinions, it is opposed to the common policy of radical and progressive-minded workers quitting the trade unions and starting rival organizations based upon ideal principles. That policy is one of the chief reasons why the American labor movement is not further advanced. Its principal effects are to destroy all radical organization in the old unions and to leave the reactionaries in undisputed control.

The Trade Union Educational League is in no sense a dual union, nor is it affiliated with any such organization. It is purely an educational body of militants within existing mass unions, who are seeking through the application of modern methods to bring the policies and structure of the labor movement into harmony with present day economic conditions. It bespeaks the active cooperation of all militant union workers. For further details apply to the

**Trade Union Educational
League**

106 North La Salle Street, Chicago

Struggle of The Trade Unions Against Fascism

By **Andreas Nin**

(With an Introduction by Earl R. Browder)

Price 15 Cents

1923

Published by
The Trade Union Educational League
106 No. La Salle St. Chicago, Ill.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN the Fascisti conquered power in Italy, and Mussolini established his dictatorship, there was no country in which the capitalist forces greeted the *coup* more heartily than in the United States. The newspapers and magazines, intensifying their yellow-journalistic hero worship, vied with one another in extolling the virtues of the Black Shirts. The Government of the U. S., the same which has for six years refused to recognize Soviet Russia because that workers' republic is "undemocratic," hastened to be among the first to accord full diplomatic recognition to the Fascist counter-revolution. That Fascism is international, and that its roots exist in America, has been fully demonstrated to all classes.

In spite, however, of all that has been written about the Fascisti, the workers of America have no clear idea as yet of what Fascism means to the labor movement. An example of the confusion existing is seen in the report of John H. Walker, President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, to the Decatur Convention of that body (September, 1923), in which the Fascist movement in this country is described as merely an extension of the well-established "open shop" drive of American capitalism. Such a point of view, natural as the mistake may be, ignores some of the most dangerous aspects of Fascism. It leads directly, even while apparent struggle against Fascism is called for, to actual surrender to the most insidious forms of that anti-working-class movement. Thus John H. Walker, in the same report, although attacking the Fascisti, calls for the formation within the labor unions of posts of the American Legion, which is an outstanding example of Fascist organization in the United States.

Fascism in this country is a many-headed menace; it is not yet well-developed and centralized, and appears under various forms and names. This multiform aspect hinders the clear understanding of Fascism by the workers. In the first place, there is the genuine Fascism, organized among the Italian workers resident in America by agents of Mussolini. The fight of the Italian militants against the Fascisti has been crystallized in the Anti-Fascist Alliance of North America, with headquarters in New York; its work has been supported by hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, and has been so effective that the parent Fascist body in Italy recently (according to a statement in the *Progresso Italo-Americano*), ordered the branches to disband and reorganize upon a different basis. It must be pointed out,

1951

JAN 8

624144

John Tramer 3.50 600.

however, that the Fascist Party of Italy is a direct factor only among the Italian immigrant population.

In the agrarian districts of the U. S., the roots of Fascism show themselves in the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. This is, without doubt, the most native, 100% American, expression of the Fascisti movement. As this is written, the State of Oklahoma, comprising 70,000 square miles of territory (more than six times the size of Belgium) is under martial law, due to a struggle between the State Government and the Ku Klux Klan. In many other States, particularly in the Middle West and South, the Klan is pushing forward its claim to power with increasing boldness.

The K. K. K. is a curious mixture; one factor is the traditions of post-Civil War days, when the Klan originated as a weapon for the subjection of the Negro recently freed from chattel-slavery—from this it gets its name, ritual, robes, flaming cross, etc.; added to this a crude anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and general "anti-foreigner," 100% American propaganda. A vaguely defined but militant anti-communist spirit is woven throughout its agitation, and becomes, in practice, anti-labor union. Nominally the K. K. K. is a centralized organization, but actually it centralizes little but the sale of robes, etc., and even in that field, the economic exploitation of the ignorance of the yokels making up its membership, the K. K. K. has split into several competing bodies. Locally it takes on the most conflicting aspects; in one community its mauling masked bands tar-and-feather and flog bootleggers—in another it turns its violence against Federal enforcers of the Volstead Act. It may, in one locality, be an instrument of small producers and tenants, trying to control the market for cotton and tobacco—in another it will be the violent suppression of tenant and farm labor movements. In its methods it is typically Fascist, except for the K. K. K. white robe and hood; the Fascisti of Italy prided themselves upon their bold and open violence. It is worthy of note that the K. K. K. has established itself chiefly in the most backward agrarian communities; in the industrial centers its dupes have been among municipal employees and similar elements.

The American Legion, composed of ex-service men, founded and led by ex-officers of the American Expeditionary Force in France, has developed along the well-known Fascist lines. In countless towns and cities it has accumulated a record of strike-breaking activities and general violence against the labor and revolutionary movements which has made it hated in labor circles. Its spiritual kinship with the Fas-

cisti of Italy is dramatically expressed in its invitation to Mussolini to be its guest at the San Francisco Convention of the Legion, October, 1923.

The American Legion has, with a keen appreciation of the tactics of Mussolini, adopted the tactic of "boring from within" the trade unions. It soon registered results with this policy, and at the Cincinnati Convention of the American Federation of Labor, June, 1922, an open alliance was proclaimed between the Legion and the Gompers bureaucracy. The national leader of the Legion addressed the A. F. of L. Convention, and Gompers appeared before the Legion. The same thing is being repeated this year, and on a much larger scale, with a program of forming American Legion posts within the trade unions themselves. When the reader has studied the course of the Fascist movement in Italy as described in this pamphlet, with the accompanying destruction of the labor movement and establishment of Fascist "unionism," it will be readily seen that in these trade union posts of the American Legion are being developed the basis for the Fascist trade unions in America. The trade union bureaucrats of America will probably furnish much of the leadership for the coming Fascist Party. If Mussolini had been able to attend the Legion Convention in San Francisco, we might have had the sublime spectacle of Samuel Gompers and Benito, the dictator, speaking together from the same platform; it would have symbolized the growing powers of Fascism within the labor movement of this country.

The full development of the American Legion as a complete Fascist movement is still a matter of the future. It has been retarded somewhat by the issue of the "soldiers' bonus," in which the American Legion found itself in open opposition to the ruling capitalist clique. Not daring to abandon the demand for the bonus, and not daring to make an aggressive fight for it in the face of the disapproval of their capitalist masters, the leaders of the Legion found the ardor of their rank and file distinctly cooled. But the basic reason is that the social and economic conditions in the United States are not ripe for a real Fascist development. There has not yet been a fundamental and far-reaching crisis in the class struggle to shake the foundations of American capitalism.

Another Fascist organization, the "Minute Men of the Constitution," was organized this year, 1923. It is led by Brigadier-General Charles G. Dawes ("Hell and Maria" Dawes) who is, in addition to his military honors, an ex-budget expert in the Harding administra-

tion and a banker, connected with the Central Trust Company of Chicago. This body is openly and frankly an adjunct of the "open shop" movement, being militantly reactionary in all its manifestations. Outwardly it is the most threatening expression of the Fascist idea in the United States, but it has not registered in any definite action as yet. Its future is still problematical. Whether it will become the powerful weapon against the trade unions that its founder wishes remains to be seen.

The affinity between the A. F. of L. bureaucracy and the Fascist idea has been pointed out in a previous paragraph. This same phenomenon is being developed in a different direction, in the campaign of violence, expulsions, and splits, launched against the adherents of the R. I. L. U. within the mass unions of America. This aspect of the situation, while impossible of extended treatment in this introduction, is of more than passing significance in the study of Fascism in America. Just as Mussolini, Rossoni, and other leaders of the Italian Fascist Party, were leaders of the Socialist and trade union movements, so we may expect the real Fascist leadership in America to spring from the Gompers bureaucracy.

An extended study of Fascism, and its relation to trade union problems, in this country has still to be made. These few lines, as an introduction to the pamphlet originally written as a report to the Enlarged Executive of the Red International of Labor Unions, July, 1923, by Andreas Nin, of Spain, Assistant General Secretary of the R. I. L. U., will serve to indicate some of the vital points of comparison between the struggle of the trade unions of Europe against Fascism, and the developing Fascist movement in the United States. Andreas Nin's pamphlet is a searching, critical study, which will be of immeasurable service to the American movement.

EARL R. BROWDER.

Chicago, September 25, 1923.

Struggle of The Trade Unions Against Fascism

By Andreas Nin

Assistant General Secretary R. I. L. U.

I.

FASCISM IS INTERNATIONAL

CONCEPTIONS of Fascism are far from unanimous. What is Fascism? Is it a purely Italian phenomenon, or has it already assumed the forms and proportions of an international movement?

We shall not here give a general analysis of this movement, since we have to confine ourselves to the activities of Fascism in the trade union movement; but we shall attempt, nevertheless, to determine its character and significance.

Very often Fascism is confused with the old forms and traditions of bourgeois reaction. But, in our opinion, Fascism is an entirely new phenomenon. Fascism may be defined as a violent and illegal action of capitalism which has its main support in the industrial and agrarian petty-bourgeoisie and in those elements which have been reduced from a higher class to a lower.

The characteristic feature of its methods is the rejection of all political formulae and slogans created by the bourgeoisie itself—such as "democracy," "justice," "free speech, press and assemblage," "parliamentarianism," etc. Also, by the application of the most violent terrorism against labor organizations and their revolutionary leaders.

Fascism is essentially a post-war phenomenon. The greater part of its adherents is made up of ex-officers and peasants.

The Fascist movement is rich in instructive lessons for the revolutionary proletariat. It shows us, above all, the necessity of having a well defined and prudent policy towards the small peasants, whose active co-operation or—at least—neutralization, is absolutely indispensable to the revolutionary proletariat if it wishes to be victorious. An ill-considered policy may convert the small peasants into the most

powerful instruments of capitalist reaction—as we have seen in Italy.

Another most important lesson that Fascism teaches us is that there is no middle-road which the proletariat can follow in the present situation. The proletariat must choose between its own dictatorship and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. If the working class does not take advantage of the opportune moment to establish its dictatorship, it will certainly be crushed by the bourgeoisie which then establishes its own dictatorial rule.

ORIGIN OF FASCISM

Fascism as a definite trade union movement exists only in Italy at the present time. But after its ascendancy to political power it spread rapidly. We may say that it is a movement which has originated in Italy, but which tends to assume similar forms in other countries. We may already speak of the birth of an international Fascist movement.

The process of the internationalization of Fascism resembles that of the revolutionary movement. In the beginning of the imperialist war there existed an international Socialism, just as an international reaction existed at the beginning of the Fascist movement.

Up to 1917, Bolshevism, which was one of the forms of international Socialism, was an exclusively Russian movement. But, with the victory of the November Revolution and the creation of the Communist International, it became a world movement. Today, Bolshevism or Communism is not a Russian doctrine but an international one. Similarly, with the advent of Mussolini to power, the different forms of reaction and White Terror all tend to turn into Fascism, which has now become an international movement with its own characteristics. It is no longer doubted that we are here confronted by an international movement, and we should regard it as such.

We must, of course, exterminate Italian Fascism first. With the fall of the Mussolini government, international Fascism's hopes would be blighted. The overthrow of Mussolini would have the same significance for world reaction as the overthrow of the Russian Soviet Republic would have for the world revolutionary movement.

FASCIST TRADE UNIONISM IN ITALY

Italian Fascism was born during the war. Its principal initiators were former revolutionaries, syndicalists, anarchists, and socialists. In

the beginning of the imperialist war these elements abandoned their comrades in order to promote Italy's participation in the world massacre.

It should be noted that the majority of these old revolutionists were leaders of the peasants movement. This explains one of the fundamental characteristics of Fascism.

These elements did not abandon their old conceptions suddenly. Thus, at the first Fascist Congress, which took place in March 1919, they adopted certain resolutions in support of the trade union movement and issued such slogans as Workers' Control, partial expropriations of the capitalists, the distribution of the lands among the peasants, the abolition of the Senate, etc.

In 1918 and 1919 they were in constant touch with De Ambris, once an old revolutionary syndicalist who became a patriot and came out in favor of Italy's participation in the world war. It was he who abandoned the Union Sindicale Italiana and founded the Union Italiana del Lavoro. The strikes called by this organization whose headquarters were in Parma, were supported by the Fascisti and were even subsidized by them. This first formation of Fascism was later modified, but its ex-revolutionary elements retained their influence until 1920.

Up to that time there were no Fascist trade unions. It was during that year that such unions began to crop up. The Fascisti became active among the peasants. This was favored by the erroneous policy of the Socialist Party. The Agricultural Workers' Federation, which was led by the Socialists, stubbornly opposed the cry of the small peasants for land, and did everything to get them into the trade union organizations, which they did not understand.

A different tactic should have been employed with regard to the peasants and workers. Indeed, as our comrades Gramscie and Tasca* wrote in a splendid article:

"The Fascisti liberated the small peasants from the yoke of an organization which did not correspond to their class." They forced the rich landlords to yield up a part of their estates, thus creating the illusion among the small peasants that the land was to be distributed among them.

The Fascisti thus created a magnificent base for recruiting among the peasantry, which still constitutes the overwhelming majority of

* "Le mouvement syndical fasciste en Italie"—No. 11 (November, 1922) of the "Red International of Labor Unions."

their troops. Later, the rest was conquered by force. The methods employed by the Fascisti—the clubbings, castor oil, punitive expeditions, etc.—are too well known for us to review them again here.

The Agricultural Workers who opposed Fascism were quickly disorganized and scattered. This was easy to achieve. Their organizations were everywhere based on the co-operatives.

The Socialist leaders were laboring under the illusion that with the possession of this great co-operative apparatus a violent revolution could be avoided. They said naively: "But we already have a Socialist Republic; we control thousands of municipalities; we have in our hands a net of co-operatives which constitute the basis of our future socialist distribution." But the incendiary acts of the Fascisti dispelled these naive illusions.

The Socialist mayors and municipal councillors were deposed with violence; Labor Council buildings were burned to the ground; the co-operatives were destroyed; the socialist agricultural masses, accustomed as they were to long economic struggles, made possible by financially strong organizations, suddenly found themselves disarmed and at the mercy of the Fascist offensive.

In this manner whole regions passed rapidly from the Socialists into the hands of the Fascisti. At first, the Fascist movement confined itself almost exclusively to the agrarian districts. It was there that Fascism could get a foothold. The conquest of the industrial proletariat was much more difficult, because proletarian class-consciousness was more developed, and the experience of long, active struggles rendered it more capable of resistance.

Labor Temples (Chambers of Labor) were burned down, and hundreds of militants were assassinated; but, in the industrial centers, Fascism progressed slowly.

Supported and abetted by the capitalists, the Fascisti forced the workers to join their Fascist unions by threatening them with death. In this way they succeeded in "enrolling" a certain number of industrial workers into their "corporations."

It is not necessary here to enter into an analysis of the percentage of voluntary membership in these organizations. In spite of their nominal adherence to the Fascist unions, the overwhelming majority of workers in the Italian factories and shops have preserved their class-consciousness. Even now, after it has come to full political power, Fascism has not succeeded in getting a hold on the proletarian masses.

PRINCIPLES AND TACTICS OF FASCIST UNIONISM

Up to the middle of 1921 there was no unity in the Fascist trade union organizations. In the course of that year, however, such an unifying organization was created under the name of the *National Conferderation of Fascist Unions*. The General Secretary of this organization is Rossoni, a former revolutionary trade unionist.

The first conference of Fascist trade unions was convened in the summer of 1921; the second conference was called in November of last year (1922). It is in the various resolutions passed at the second conference and in the declaration of its leaders that we find the true ideology of Fascist trade unionism.

What are the principles that guide these organizations? Whatever its variations, Fascist trade unionism is based on the same principles as yellow trade unionism; it pursues the same policy as the strike-breaking organizations that have always existed.

No wonder, then, that Mr. Albert Thomas, the President of the International Labor Bureau and one of the luminaries of the yellow Amsterdam International has such great admiration for the Fascist trade unions. This renegade of Socialism, who was in Italy last March, had the audacity to declare to the editor of "L'Epoca" that Fascist trade unionism is "a completely novel and interesting experiment."

We shall here try to examine the general ideas of Fascist trade unionism and determine the extent to which these ideas have been realized in practice.

CLASS PEACE VERSUS CLASS STRUGGLE

Fascist trade unionism has for its guiding tenet the principle that national interests, which, as we know, are nothing else than bourgeois interests, should supercede all other interests. It therefore rejects the class struggle and preaches class collaboration.

The Fascisti have, of course, revived the slogan of proclaiming the necessity of increased production, so near and dear to the bourgeoisie and to Mr. Albert Thomas. "While Socialism," said Rossoni, in one of his speeches, delivered on the 19th of January, 1923, "contends that human welfare must be brought about through the abolition of private property, Fascism is based on the fundamental theory that such well-being can only be the result of intensified production and industry."

All classes of society are to co-operate harmoniously in the task of building up "the nation." This principle of class collaboration finds its most characteristic expression in the clauses adopted by the National Conference of (Fascist) Trade Unions at its November conference, 1922.

PROCLAMATION OF FASCIST UNION PRINCIPLES

These clauses read: Under the name of the National Confederation of Trade Unions there has been created throughout Italian territory, an organization which unites, under the Italian flag, all citizens, regardless of sex or religion, who form part of all classes and all categories of labor, manual and intellectual.

The Confederation declares that a society based on the unions protects in an equal measure the interests of all categories and of all classes, and establishes among them a net of economic and legal relations which determines their respective social functions.

Thus, the trade union organization is no longer a special characteristic of the working class, despite the fact that the latter has created this organic form. Henceforth, this form becomes an organic part of the Nation as a whole; as such it culminates in the Nation itself and becomes the supreme synthesis of all material and moral values of the race.

The Confederation declares that all classes of society are equally necessary, for each one of them performs a certain function assigned to it by the necessary and rational division of work and production. The further their social functions develop the stronger these classes become, for these functions are determined by economic development, and could never lead to the abolition of classes—since this would mean the retrogression and suspension of activities in the domain of work and production.

The Confederation further declares that the dynamic law of history does not consist in the Class Struggle, that is, in the antagonism and conflict of social functions, nor does it consist in Class Collaboration, which is the confusion of social functions. On the contrary, it consists of the Conflict of Capacities; i. e., of the struggle of groups in the inferior class which have reached a stage of development that enables them to perform the functions of the higher classes, against those groups in the superior class which have lost the capacity of fulfilling the functions incumbent upon their classes.

The Confederation declares as the fundamental principle of trade union organization the formula: The Struggle of Capacities.

But it cannot be tolerated that class organizations or groups of citizens have as their aim the destruction of social functions. *It is therefore impossible to permit the general strike*, which affects all classes and groups throughout the Nation."

ACTUAL CLASS COLLABORATION

Notwithstanding this thesis on the Struggle of Capacities, it is obvious that the fundamental principle of Fascist trade unionism is Class Collaboration. There is nothing new in this. The only original feature that we find in it is the preponderating role assigned to the middle classes (what the American newspapers call "the public"). This is the characteristic fundamental principle that we have pointed out above.

In his report to the Conference, Rossoni also defined the role of the petty-bourgeoisie in the following words:

It is the middle classes which have always made the greatest sacrifices and which have always remained loyal, for never have they acted to the detriment of the Nation for selfish reason; they are the classes that furnish society with talent and civilization. National trade unionism should be a movement of the elite; it is for this reason that it has its main support in the middle classes, which have furnished us during the war with the bravest officers.

COMPOSITION AND MONOPOLY OF FASCIST UNIONS

The leaders of Fascist trade unionism have always conceived their unions as organs comprising all social classes. During the session of the Supreme Council, Mussolini uttered the following:

Fascist trade unionism differs from the ordinary trade unionism in that the former has a few of its own characteristics and originality. It is the workers, employers and technicians who constitute a harmonious whole with one, single aim—that of obtaining the maximum of production and prosperity by subordinating everything to the interest of the fatherland. This conception contradicts the Marxist formula which considers the Class War as inevitable."

Fascism, which considers itself the sole representative of the Nation, treats every other trade union organization as illegal. Its immediate aspiration, therefore, is to get a trade union monopoly (a single organization that unites all classes).

624144

The methods employed by Fascism for obtaining such a monopoly before it seized power are sufficiently known; punitive expeditions, assassinations, arson, etc. After it came into power this aspiration for a trade union monopoly was expressed in one of the resolutions passed at their trade union conference in November. It deals with the functions of consultative organs of the state, as follows:

The National Council of the Fascist Confederation of Trade Union Organizations, having discussed the question of the nature of the functions of consultative state organs, whose task it is to solve the labor questions, hereby decides to request the Government to ratify the following project:

Only the representatives of trade union organizations whose statutes are based on the nationalist principles and whose activities are in full accord with the needs and interests of the Nation, are to be permitted into the State organs.

No representatives of trade union organizations which have or permit any international affiliations with other organizations which do not participate in, or are beyond the control of the national government—can be admitted into such State organs.

At the same conference another resolution was passed which proposes that all labor conflicts should be referred to special commissions headed by persons appointed by the competent roots of the National Fascist Party. Thus we see that the only organization that is recognized is that of the Fascisti.

Two months before the Supreme Fascist Council met, the Central Committee of the Fascist Party, as well as the most influential members of their trade union movement, had declared themselves categorically in favor of a monopoly. This question was debated exhaustively by the Supreme Council which adopted the following resolution moved by Farinacci and Rossoni:

FASCIST UNIONS AND PARTY CO-OPERATE

The Supreme Fascist Council recognizes in the trade union organizations one of the aspects of National Fascist Revolution, to whose needs and discipline they submit unconditionally. The Supreme Fascist Council, in conformity with the decisions adopted at its first session, declares itself against any trade union monopoly; none the less, it considers it necessary that all workers, technicians and employers should be brought under the control of Fascism by means of intense propaganda and agitation activities. For only under a single discipline and a single faith is it possible

to obtain effective co-operation of all productive elements in the supreme interests of the Nation.

Moreover, the Supreme Fascist Council declares that all Fascist members should belong and take an active part in the management and leadership of the Fascist trade union organizations, and that all organized Fascist groups (railroad workers, postal and telegraph workers) join the Fascist Confederation of Trade Union Organizations.

One of the most prominent Fascist leaders, Farinacci, declared at the same session that Class Collaboration is not an utopia, but a clear affirmation of Fascist trade unionism which has been demonstrated and accepted and which has already been realized in practice.

CLASS UNIONISM AND FASCIST UNIONISM COLLIDE

The truth of the matter is just the contrary. The idyllic harmony of all classes has no basis in reality. The workers had no need of opposing the formation of unions which comprise exploiters and exploited, because the bourgeoisie itself, which is most sensitive to its class interests, did not accept this form of organization.

The General Industrial Confederation (an employers' organization) and the Central Confederation of Agriculture (a landlords' organization), refused to enter the Fascist unions. Both of these organizations insisted upon retaining their autonomy. Mussolini was compelled to recognize that the position adopted by these two organizations was justified.

Answering indirectly to the Fascist elements which insisted upon the dissolution of the Industrial Confederation, Mussolini insisted that not only would it be wrong to destroy this organization, but that everything should be done to promote its development "in the supreme interests of the Nation." The communist paper of Trieste, "El Lavoratore," has characterized this correctly by saying that "The Italian capitalists want Fascism as their tool but not as their director or ally."

As to the General Confederation of Agriculture, the supreme head of Fascism made no public comment; but there is no doubt that in this case also he will not change his decision "in the supreme interests of the Nation," that is, in the interests of a regime of capitalism whose deterioration already manifests itself in more than one unmistakable symptom.

The attitude of the agrarians, however, far from roused the unanimous response of the Fascisti. When the refusal of the Confedera-

tion of Agriculture (employers and landlords) to merge with the Fascist unions, became known, Baroncini, the Fascist commissar of Bologna and the provincial secretary of the Federation, became so indignant that he announced his determination to use the usual Fascist methods in dealing with "these gentlemen," "I," he said, "I, who have crushed the rebellious proletariat, will also crush the rebellious agrarians."

Of course, Baroncini will have to swallow his indignation and the autonomy of the Confederation of Agriculture will have to be respected as was that of the Confederation of Industry. Thus, in spite of the decisions of the Supreme Council and the leading Fascist organs, Italian Fascism is obliged to renounce the application of one of the most essential principles of Fascist trade unionism. *This shows clearly that the Class Struggle is not merely a principle invented by Marx, but a fact which must be faced.*

The Fascisti are obliged by the exigencies of the Class Struggle to revise their fundamental principles. They have therefore advanced a new theory, that of "trade unionism of militant minorities of Fascisti and not of large masses of workers." In other words, the Fascist trade unions are to be organizations absolutely identical with the strike-breaking organizations.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN SPITE OF FASCISM

In spite of all efforts of Fascism to stifle the class struggle, it breaks out in their own ranks. At the session of the Supreme Fascist Council Mussolini said that since the seizure of power by the Fascisti no strikes have taken place, because all conflicts were wisely prevented by the Fascist leaders. Conflicts, however, did break out. It is interesting to note that they were usually provoked by the members of the Fascist trade unions.

The heads of the Fascist trade unions are compelled, therefore, in spite of themselves, to lead such strikes after they have exhausted all their trickeries in the attempt to avoid the conflict. Facts have sufficiently demonstrated the truth of that Marxism which Rossoni characterizes as "a doctrine insufficiently realistic, and arbitrary in its conclusions."

Let us examine some of the more important strikes. In April, 500 "Fascist" workers went on strike in one of the textile factories in Spoleto. This was a protest strike against the attempted 10%

reduction of wages. In the same month a strike broke out in Trieste as a protest against the discharge of 50 workers. The heads of the Fascist unions attributed the strike to individual initiative and advised the workers to return to work. The fact was that the strike had been imposed upon the workers by armed Fascist groups because among those discharged were five or six members of the Fascisti.

On the 22nd of March, 1600 "Fascist" trade unionists declared a strike in Monfalcone as a protest against the discharge of 18 workers. On the 2nd of April a strike was called by the printers of the Graphic Institute of Bergone. An April 3rd the metal workers struck at Villa Perosa (Turin). On April 11th, 2000 tile workers were locked out in Rome because they refused to accept a 25% wage reduction. In the Province of Sienna the farms were occupied in order to compel the owners to recognize the trade unions.

A general strike was declared in Parma, and telegraph and telephone lines were destroyed. In Paggiox Bealle, near Naples, the cotton workers called a strike as a protest against the 20% wage cut. In Reggio Emilia the Fascist trade union called a strike of the metal workers. In Genoa about a thousand workers occupied the docks (April 10th) because of the suspension of work in the construction of new docks, due to the refusal of credits by the Government.

In Trieste the Seamen's Federation, which is headed by Fascisti who, as we know, concluded an agreement with Giolitti, held up a ship for four hours and forced the owners of the ship to discharge the non-union seamen and to replace them with union members. On March 30th a textile strike was called in Eusto Arission. In Chatillion, Turin, 2000 textile workers quit work, refusing to accept a 15% wage reduction.

In Milan, 80% of the metal and building workers and 60% of all typographical workers, quit work. Bombs exploded in Naples and Trieste. In Turin a red flag waved for four hours on the top of the highest tower in the city.

The leaders of Fascist trade unionism are very uneasy in the face of such manifestations of the class struggle, which puncture their theory. They display a remarkable naivete in their attempt to explain away these facts. For them, especially for Rossoni, the existence of these facts does not disprove the correctness of the principles of class-collaboration. They attribute them to a "certain unhealthy section of the bourgeoisie," which must be combatted.

FASCISM HAS NO HOLD ON INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

We have already pointed out that the main support of Fascism is the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Fascism has not succeeded in conquering the industrial proletariat. According to the data furnished by the head of the Fascist trade unions, their membership is 800,000. In December, 1922, however, their secretary claimed but 250,000.

According to a report delivered to the recent Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International by the Italian delegation, the Fascist troops are composed of 60% of peasants, i. e., of about 500,000 workers recruited in the agricultural districts where Fascism arose about two years ago (Emilia, Romagna, Puelles, Venetia). About 100,000 Fascisti are employed in the Public Service (railroad workers, post and telegraph, seamen and municipal employes). Some 50,000 are employed in the large undertakings; the rest are industrial workers.

"The latter," says the report, "are distributed in several cities where the Terror has attained incredible proportions, and where trade union membership has assumed the form of military recruiting," as for example in the districts of Venetia, Julianne, Alexandrai, Casale and Carara. If we take into consideration that Italy has more than 3,000,000 of industrial workers, we get an idea of the lack of real Fascist influence among the industrial proletariat.

In spite of the frightful Fascist Terror, the industrial workers did not hesitate to express their real sentiments and to affirm their class-consciousness whenever circumstances permitted. This is to be seen in the election of Factory and Shop Councils. A few samples may be cited from the hundreds of instances that have occurred in recent months:

In the election of a representative to the Street Car Men's Council, which took place in January, 1923, in Rome, the candidate of the C. G. T. obtained 4,000 votes, whereas the candidate of the Fascisti and Nationalists received less than 700 votes. In the elections which took place in the same month on the docks of Pola, the trade union candidates received 1,700 votes, while the Fascist candidate received only 603 votes.

In Turin the Fascisti were beaten in the election of the Shop Council in the Piemon automobile factory. By employing all sorts of manouvres, and by using violence, the Fascisti succeeded in having the election annulled. New elections were instituted. It was an-

nounced that if the Fascisti should not be victorious, the workers not belonging to the Fascist unions would be discharged. The local trade union organization recommended to the workers to cast blank ballots with the following inscription: "We want bread and work." The result was as follows: 998 blanks, 753 Fascisti votes, and 728 abstentions. On the day following the Fascisti shut down the factory and about 1,500 workers who were suspected of disseminating anti-Fascist ideas were chased out.

At the election of Administrative Committees for the FIAT (Turin), in March, the Red union obtained 3,534 votes as against 1,791 cast for the Fascisti and Catholics. In the "Tecnomasio Italiano" of Brown-Bowen, 70% of the 2,000 workers voted for the list put up by the FIOM (Federation of Italian Metal Workers). The victories of the Red unions over the Fascisti have multiplied in Turin during this month. In the Spa factory the union candidate won by 480 votes against 67; in Lancia, by 497 against 104; in the *Rapid*, the Fascisti obtained 125 votes with 400 abstentions.

We thus see that wherever Fascism cannot impose itself with the bayonet, the candidates of the revolutionary workers are elected. The class-consciousness of the Italian proletariat has remained intact. This does not mean that no danger threatens the revolutionary movement in Italy, but it is a sign that justifies our hope for a reaction on the part of the Italian working class.

II.

FASCIST TRADE UNIONISM IN GERMANY

GERMAN Fascism, which is becoming more aggressive from day to day, is a result of the decomposition of the bourgeois State, the disillusion produced among the middle classes by the complete failure of the Social-Democratic policy, and the growth of national feeling precipitated by the Entente policy. Until recently there existed in Germany isolated organizations whose aim was the restoration of the monarchy. But for some months past, German reaction, stimulated by the victory of Fascism in Italy, tends to imitate the Italian model.

The Fascist elements in Germany consist chiefly of officers and intellectuals, the "Orgesch," the ex-members of the "Freiwehr" organizations formed by Noske, students, police officers, and civil servants. It was proven that the Fascist organizations are openly supported by the Reichswehr (National Guard).

There is no single organization. The most powerful Fascist organization is that of Hitler in Bavaria. There is also the Union of Patriotic Societies headed by Heisler, who recruits his forces in Northern Germany; "The German Order," composed of officials; "The National Union of German Officers"; the clandestine groups of Eckhardt, Rossbach, etc., the Kunze group which is mainly active in the yellow unions.

The political expression of these Fascist organizations is the National Socialist Party (Hitler) and the German Party of Freedom, the latter being the result of a split in the German Populist Party, whose heads are Greffe, Hiller, and Emming.

At the Fascist Congress which has just taken place in Munich (Bavaria) in January, 1923, Hitler defined the fundamental principles of his organization: "Our fundamental task is not to fight the French, but to get rid of the Communists and criminals responsible for the November episode." His slogan has become the *leitmotif* of German Fascist propaganda, which threatens not only the Communists but also the Social-Democrats.

The anti-proletarian character of this movement manifested itself most strikingly at a meeting of the Union of Patriotic Societies (April 6th). At this meeting German Fascism adopted the following fundamental principles: Increase of production (we know what this means

when uttered by the tools of capitalism), abolition of the eight-hour day, lower wages, piece-work, and the introduction of compulsory work in place of the abolished military service. All this, of course, for the glory of the German Fatherland.

German Fascism has borrowed its methods from the Italian model. Terrorism against the workers' organizations (dispersing of meetings, murdering of revolutionary leaders, and criminal acts against proletarian newspapers), and propaganda among the indifferent and vacillating elements among the proletariat.

THE DEMAGOGIC PROGRAM OF GERMAN FASCISM

After the Italian experience, German Fascism is aware of the fact that in order to conquer it must become a social movement. That is why it has considerably intensified its agitation in the last few months.

In order to find that broad social basis which it lacks, German Fascism is carrying on a demagogic campaign of anti-semitism and anti-capitalism which, as Comrade Boetcher has pointed out in a recent article, is re-echoed in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie and among the vacillating elements of the proletariat, thanks to the great misery of the masses and to the treachery of the Social-Democrats and reformists.

In their propaganda the Fascisti attack most violently the speculators and profiteers, and the financial policy of the Government and the incapability of the Social-Democrats; they demand complete equality for all elements of the working class in the field of political and national economy, the legal protection of the natural rights of each individual to possess the necessary instruments of production, the formation of a national economic parliament, the participation of the workers in industry, etc.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The German Fascisti know very well that they have no chance of crushing the great mass of the German proletariat. That is why they try to penetrate this mass from within the factories, where they send students, intellectuals, and other Fascist elements who, disguised as workers, organize nuclei in these enterprises.

A large number of the Fascisti have thus been able to make their way to the factories of Central Germany and the Rhur. However opposed they are to the principle of Shop Councils, they never fail to

put up their own list of candidates in order to take advantage of this vital movement of the German workers in the interests of the Fascisti cause. Fascisti elements have been elected recently in several places to different Shop and Factory Committees in Berlin and Upper Silesia.

The Fascisti have also begun to organize Fascist trade unions on the Italian model. These unions have declared themselves to be against strikes and boycotts. They combat Marxism and carry on a struggle against the Red labor organizations. They reject all international affiliations with any proletarian organization and defend, hand in hand with the capitalists, "the interests of the German Fatherland." Recently a "Union of Popular Fighting Organizations" (Fascist trade unions) was formed in Berlin: it is composed of different national groups of workers and clerks. The *Deutsche Tageblatt* (a capitalist organ) characterized these organizations as follows:

These fighting organizations should inspire the working class with that faith which leads from Jewish Socialism to the National Ideal; they should strive to liberate the German people which is suffering under the yoke of Capital and under the lies of judeo-marxism. The Fascist unions will fight not only against the capitalist who personally manages his enterprise, but also against the Jewish dupery of international finance, whose attitude towards the working class benefits neither employe nor employer, but is one of speculation and usury, and under cover of anonymous society has become a weapon of criminal exploitation of German labor power and national economy. All international connections, especially with the countries of the predatory Entente, should be abandoned as incompatible with the dignity of the German worker. Similarly with affiliation with international organizations standing on a platform of Class Struggle. The Fascist Unions are strictly neutral on all religious and political creeds.

The German Fascisti would be very much embarrassed if they were asked to explain how they intend to maintain such trade union neutrality. In Germany, as in Italy, the Fascist trade unions are subjected to the absolute dictatorship of the political chiefs. If any doubt exists on this point, we cite the two paragraphs from a circular recently issued by the General Secretary of the German Fascist Unions:

The Conferences, congresses, and deliberations of the Fascist unions can only be convened with the previous permission of the General Secretary; the election of provincial secretaries is subject to the approval of the General Secretary; the local secretaries are appointed and receive their instructions from above, that is to say,

a strict dictatorship is exercised. In all economic actions of any political importance the Fascist unions must follow the instructions of the Party, bearing in mind that their task consists solely in solving questions of a purely economic nature.

PROGRAM OF THE FASCIST TRADE UNIONS

In the foregoing is drawn a vivid picture of German Fascist trade unionism. It will be useful to reproduce, in addition, the program of the Fascist unions, contained in a secret report which has fallen into the hands of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party. This program was edited by Farenhorst, the head of this movement. It contains the following points:

1. The struggle against Jewish international capital.
2. The Fascist unions must everywhere protect private capital.
3. Struggle against the Marxist trade unions.
4. Rejection of all co-operation with international organizations.
5. Renunciation of all kinds of strikes, boycotts, Factory Councils.*

6. The Fascist trade unions are to admit into their ranks all workers of a nationalist tendency, and are not to request affiliation to any party whatever. These unions should have about the same relations with the Nationalist Popular Party as the General German Trade Union Federation has with the German Social Democratic Party.

The same secret report contains certain answers by Farenhorst to a question put by one of the members of the Fascist union:

1. Neither members of Marxian or Democratic Parties who wish to remain in these parties, nor Jews, can become members of the Fascist Union (these organizations will not tolerate the existence of any strong opposition).
2. The Fascist trade union organizers are aware of the fact that the renunciation of the strike is the most delicate point on the program. But they are confident that the Fascist workers will comprehend it, because: (a) the workers are beginning to see that strikes react unfavorably on the economic life of the country; (b) owing to their limited financial means, at the present time, the trade unions are powerless and cannot win strikes; (c) the workers are tired of strikes.

* Fascisti are to enter Factory Councils only as saboteurs.

3. The discontent of the workers with their leaders must be taken advantage of, as well as that provoked by the high membership dues. Low membership fees should be established.

4. The experience of the Italian Fascisti must be utilized. (Farenhorst warns, however, against too systematic and irrational an application of Italian Fascist tactics in Germany.)

5. When the movement is sufficiently strong, they must follow the example of Mussolini, and proceed to the destruction, by force of arms, of the Socialist trade unions. Hitler, from then on, can set fire to all the People's Houses and the free unions of Bavaria.

STRENGTH OF GERMAN FASCIST UNIONISM

Up to the present the Fascist unions have succeeded in attracting only those elements which are already found in the strike-breakers' organizations. Apparently they have had a certain success among the workers of Upper Silesia, which is explicable by the strong nationalist sentiment prevailing in that region.

According to information supplied by the Fascisti themselves, 12,000 miners have joined their organization in Upper Silesia. In the remainder of Germany there has been practically no organization of Fascist unions. It will be difficult, indeed, for them to break the organization of German trade unionism. But this does not mean that there is no danger. It is for this reason that there is an urgent necessity for vigorous action on the part of the revolutionary workers.

III.

ROOTS OF FASCISM IN FRANCE

IN France the political and economic conditions necessary for the appearance of a real Fascist movement do not exist. But the bourgeoisie is preparing the framework. In 1919, alarmed by the progress of the revolutionary movement, Civic Unions were established in several cities. The first to be formed were at Lyons, Paris, Dijon, and Bordeaux. The immediate object of these Civic Unions is that of replacing workers on strike. In 1920, the Paris Civic Union opened recruiting offices. Its members were active during the strikes of last May. Their intervention was one of the causes for the defeat of the working class.

The first manifesto of the French National Confederation of Civic Unions was published April 3, 1920. There are significant phrases in it as, for example:

Strikes are becoming more frequent. In greater and greater number they have an origin and aim exclusively political. If these frequent strikes already constitute a public danger, then general strikes could paralyse the life of the nation and plunge it into the most dire catastrophe.

Without waiting for the general strike to open wide the gates of revolution, so that it be necessary to resort to force in order to combat it, it is the duty of everyone to avert this peril. Let all good citizens organize and prepare to resist within the limit of their rights and the law.

The object of the Civic Union is to prepare for voluntary mobilization, in order to hinder attempts at the general strike and the stoppage of public services. Let all good citizens who wish to stop the onward march of anarchy afford us their assistance. Let all societies and groups, faithful to the ideal of order and liberty, give us their collective support, and conduct among their members that voluntary recruiting which is necessary to the success of our common task. When the agitators who are, consciously or not, the agents of foreign powers, see all our energies arrayed against them they will be reduced to impotence.

The constituent congress of the National Confederation of Civic Unions took place in July, 1920. Article 3, of its constitution, informs us sufficiently as to the character of these organizations:

The national Confederation of Civic Unions organizes its members outside of all class lines, all political or religious dis-

tinctions, in order to aid the functioning of those public services which are indispensable to the country, in case of the desertion of their employes; to constitute auxiliary services capable of replacing all or part of the regular personnel; to prepare efficient methods for obtaining this objective; and, finally, to aid in the maintenance of order, in co-operation with the public forces for the preservation of peace.

At the head of the Confederation is a committee of 18 members, of whom the president is General Balfourier. This committee has extended powers. It is elected for three years, and one-third only is renewed at each election. A permanent committee of 12 members prepares the work for the committee and is charged with "establishing, in all that concerns the confederation, contact with the forces of order, the public services, and the press." A General Secretary and a complete technical apparatus looks after the work. An extensive propaganda is carried on by means of pamphlets and leaflets. An informational Bulletin is also published.

The most important services are that of registration of membership and of public services. The first is concerned with the registration of volunteers, the preparation for their mobilization, etc. The second records the various grades and functions in the public services and factories and, in times of strikes, organizes recruiting bureaus and establishes the necessary contact. The mobilization of the Civic Unions is ordered by the Minister of Public Works.

So far, in these organizations, we find only the traditional characteristics of all strike-breaking bodies. But they have a far wider conception of their future. One of their propagandists, M. St. Marcel, a short time ago said:

In general the Civic Unions are organized in order to proceed in harmony with the Government, but in the event—most improbable in France—that the Government should fall into the hands of anti-social parties, the Unions would know how to modify their organizations immediately, in order to remain a guardian of the public interests and to ignore, as in Denmark, in 1920, the approval or disapproval of ministers who are enemies of public order and the constitution.

The Civic Unions have, therefore, been undertaken with definitely Fascist motives. The menace of a *coup d'état* is sufficiently clear. Our comrade, Herclet, states that in all the principal French cities "fighting bands" are being formed.

In order to determine the real character of the Civic Guards, let us take a few paragraphs from the instructions followed by the Rouen section:

The object of the Civic Guards is to aid in the maintenance of order and defense in co-operation with the army and constabulary. In times of peace, the army is nowadays not numerous enough that it can alone assure the preservation of public order, the respect for individual liberty, and protect the railway stations, highways, bridges, works of art, etc., against criminal attacks. It is therefore urgent and essential to organize voluntary corps, that is, companies of Civic Guards.

Further on it states that special voluntary corps are organized with the approval, and under the control, of the prefects of police. Usually the unit is composed of one battallion commandant, two captains, four lieutenants and 12 lower officers. The number of men is indefinite. In case of strikes in the public services, or serious disorders, the prefect was to request the services of the Civic Guard. On the order of the prefect, each civic guardsman receives an order telling him of the mustering-point, which is usually the nearest barracks. After their arrival at the barracks the guardsmen are equipped, clothed, and armed, exactly like soldiers. The officers and men receive a daily allowance of 20 francs for the first call, and 15 francs for the second.

The Civic Guards, requisitioned by the public authorities in the same way as the army, march not according to regular formation and unit; they maintain their autonomy in the execution of the duties confided to them by the superior authorities, and must obey only their own chiefs. They belong neither to the police nor to the constabulary.

At the end of these instructions, in an appeal "To Old Soldiers and Volunteers," is the following:

Our citizens have not only learned not to fear blows, but are ready to descend into the street, if needs must be, to punish disturbers. It is for this reason that we appeal to the patriotism of the veterans of our district, requesting them to register immediately with the Civic Guards of Rouen. If each realizes his duty, we shall easily be able to establish a voluntary corps, composed of dependable men, ready to become the defenders of order, with the moderation, cool-headedness, and courage, of which they have already given such striking examples.

IV.

FASCISM IN AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

SINCE the downfall of the Austrian Empire, there have always been military groups in Austria which aimed at the restoration of the monarchy. Since 1922, under the influence of Italian Fascism, these isolated groups commenced to manifest a more definite character and to co-ordinate their work. This budding Fascism depends mainly upon state functionaries, ex-officers, students, the unemployed, unorganized workers, and, naturally, hired mercenaries.

The Fascist press is carrying on a campaign of the utmost violence against the revolutionary elements. Sanguinary conflicts have already taken place between Fascisti and workers. When the authorities were called to intervene, they have always shown their partiality for the Fascisti.

The principal Fascist organizations in Austria are as follows: 1. The Tyrolean organization; 2. "The Defenders of the Fatherland," in Solsberg; 3. "The Union for Defense," Upper Austria; 4. The Styrian organization, which is one of the most powerful and possesses all sorts of arms, including artillery; 5. "The Union for Defense of the Fatherland," at Corinthia; and 6. "The Vanguard" in Vienna. All these organizations are substantially supported by the bourgeoisie and the Government. They are in relationship with the Hungarian Fascist organization.

Fascist trade unionism proper has not yet made its appearance in Austria. There does exist, however, a "Union for the protection of order and economic interests," which constitutes a suitable foundation for such unions. In the beginning this organization, like the French Civic Union, was merely a strike-breaking organization. But every day it advances further on the offensive. It is constantly carrying on provocation and espionage within the working-class organizations. In order to accomplish this, the union divides workers into three groups, "those worthy of confidence; those unworthy of confidence; and the dangerous elements." Naturally, the union supports only those workers who "are worthy of confidence," that is, those who are ready to betray their class brothers.

Against the other workers, not alone the "dangerous" but even the indifferent, the union meditates implacable persecution. There has not yet been a real Fascist union established; but this organization

carries on active recruiting work within the factories. In this work it makes use of certain devoted elements, disguised as workers, just as does German Fascism.

The Austrian proletariat has energetically fought against these attempts to introduce Fascism. The "Union for Republican Defense," composed of well-armed groups of workers, has been established. In spite of the sabotage of the Social Democrats, this organization now constitutes the best guarantee for the Austrian working class of its safety. One must not forget that the Austrian proletariat, with its 1,500,000 organized workers, is in a position to offer serious resistance to Fascism.

THE "AWAKENING HUNGARIANS"

The Fascist movement in Hungary is one of the oldest of its kind. Here we find the essential characteristics of all such movements. It is the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, state employes and officers, who were used by the Hungarian bourgeoisie, after the overthrow of the Hungarian Soviets, to crush the proletariat. The principal organization is the "Awakening Hungarians," of whom the principal leaders are the anti-Semite and Nationalist-Christians, Gembesch, Eckards, and Wolf. They are in close and continual touch with the Austrian Fascisti.

There are no Fascist trade unions in Hungary, but one would say that Betlen's Government is doing its best to prepare the road for them. It recently issued a law on labor conflicts and trade unions, which renders the existence of class organizations absolutely impossible. We read in this law, for example, the following: "Every individual has the right of accepting or declining any kind of work within the limits of existing laws and obligations assumed by him." The expression, "within the limits of the existing laws," surely says enough. This is no question of the liberty of labor, but coercion. This same law attacks unionism, thus favoring the exploitation of the working class. The placing of workers in employment is given to the Government Labor Exchanges, instead of to the unions, as has been the case until now.

Trade union constitutions, under the new law, must be approved by the Ministry of the Interior. "In the interests of public order," the minister may forbid unions from commencing to function before this approval be granted. No one under 18 years of age is allowed to join a union. Thus they endeavor to protect the working class youth from revolutionary infection.

The unions are forbidden to receive any monies except those in the form of regular dues. Any trade union body may be dissolved if the authorities consider that it is not complying with any portion of this law. They go even farther; every time a trade union committee, according to the opinion of the police, is not fulfilling the provisions of this law, a representative of the Government may be delegated to attend their meetings. Members under 21 years of age are not permitted to vote. Any member of a union may demand of the Ministry of the Interior, the cancellation of any resolution taken by a union meeting.

A union is responsible for any damage occurring to a third party in periods of conflict. In virtue of this provision, after every strike a union may be sentenced to pay heavy damages. Unions must render an account of their activities to the authorities and, on demand, must furnish them with a list of their members.

The police have the right of entering union headquarters at any time, to be present at committee meetings, to supervise the account, documents and correspondence. The Minister of the Interior may start an action against any union, if he so thinks fit, and even may designate a temporary Executive Committee to take the place of the regular one. Besides this, the minister has the right of dissolving any union, at any time he may think it necessary.

It is obvious that no class organization could comply with the various conditions of this law. Thus it is favorable to the formation of Fascist unions which, naturally, will willingly submit to these various measures. The law is directed toward the end of destroying the genuine trade unions and establishing Fascist unions in their stead.

V.

FASCISM IN SPAIN

THE elements constituting the basis of Spanish Fascism are: (a) the Somaten, (b) the Free Unions, (c) the Citizen Guard, (d) the Requieres, (e) the Defense Committees. Traditionally, the Somaten was a sort of rural police which engaged in the pursuit of malefactors. Its great majority was composed of petty-bourgeois and peasants who joined voluntarily. It only functioned when circumstances demanded.

Towards the end of 1918, the bourgeoisie, alarmed by the growth of the revolutionary labor movement, organized the Somaten in the large cities and particularly in Barcelona, the center of the revolutionary movement. The Somaten is under the orders of the Captain General, that is to say, the military commander of the district. It is commanded by military officers. Its members perform the functions of strike-breakers, police, and white guards.

Since March, 1919, when the Somaten made its appearance on the occasion of the great general strike in Barcelona, it has played an important role. It replaces strikers, does patrol duty, searches and examines passersby, and secures arrests. Its members often murder working-class militants.

In Barcelona alone, the Somaten has 12,000 members. It has recently perfected its organization to a considerable degree. Its members are armed with Winchester rifles, and they also have machine guns and armoured cars. They have organized a complete spy-service, and have a central bureau where are piled the police records of all revolutionary elements.

The "free unions" were organized towards the end of 1920. They are unions only in name, being really bands of assassins, recruited from among the most debased social elements. The members of these bands are furnished with permits to carry arms, furnished by the police. They have killed scores of our best militants. Not only are they not molested by the police, but they even receive protection from them. Quite often the police, members of the Somaten, and the free unions, take part together in attacks upon the workers.

As a consequence of the combined action of the authorities and the "free unions," the trade unions were completely crushed. It was then that the "free unions" really commenced seriously to organize as

such. Groups of them presented themselves in the factories and, revolvers in hand, forced the workers to join the "free unions." They succeeded in obtaining the membership of several thousands of workers in this way, but it was purely a nominal membership.

In fact as soon as constitutional guarantees were restored, the workers deserted the "free unions" en masse, and joined the revolutionary unions. During two or three months the "free unions" ceased their outrages. But the bourgeoisie of Barcelona, fearing the renewal of the revolutionary working-class movement, engineered the re-appearance of the White Terror. For some months not a day has passed without the murder of working-class militants by the "free unions."

The Citizen Guards, established in 1917, has aims similar to those of the Somaten and the French Civic Unions; but it is numerically weak. It exists in several cities, notably in Madrid and Saragosa, but so far has not played an important role.

The Requetas is an organization of the youth of the ultra-reactionary Carlist Party. They are organized on a military basis, and have murdered several of their political adversaries. They sometimes work together with the "free unions."

The Defense Committees, composed of army officers and founded in 1917, are a sort of secret power which exercises control over various political organizations of the country. Profoundly dissatisfied with the Government, and especially with its policy in Morocco, the Defense Committees threaten to engage in wider action. They are also the inciters of practically every form of persecution against the workers.

ANARCHIST TACTICS FAIL

The Spanish Anarchists, leading the National Confederation of Labor whose members have been particularly the victims of the White Guards, find no tactics with which to oppose this terror, except through attacks upon individuals. The consequences of this have been disastrous. An outrage committed by one side necessarily implies reprisals from the other. Thus terrorism continues indefinitely.

The workers are very dissatisfied with the tactics of the Anarchists, and daily manifest more sympathy for the R. I. L. U. followers who advise them that the most efficacious method of opposing Spain's growing Fascism is through mass action, the united front, and the organization of proletarian self-defense bands.

VI.

THE ARGENTINE FASCISTI

IN 1919, the Argentine bourgeoisie commenced to organize to beat back the rising wave of revolution. In this year the National-Industrial Association was founded. Capitalists, petty and large employers, landlords, shopkeepers, and others, are all obliged to belong to this organization under threat of boycott. Every member of the Association is compelled to pay a high entrance fee and a monthly contribution, for the purpose of forming a treasury with which to resist the attacks of the working class. No employer has the right to enter into separate agreements with his workers, or to make any arrangements with them, without the preliminary authorization of the Executive Committee.

On the initiative of the Association there was founded, also in 1919, the Patriotic League, an organization of White Guards, with local sections in all towns of the republic. In the capital and other large cities these are again divided into sub-sections, each one with its own corps. These corps are engaged in harrassing the workers, in systematic organization of espionage within working-class organizations, and the supply of strike-breakers. The League has founded technical schools for the training of the latter; and it also possesses a school for its propagandists and agitators. All members of the League are permitted to carry arms. The Government grants the League full liberty of action, as well as moral and material support.

In all strikes the League leaves the traces of its sanguinary labors. Many militants have been killed. In the interior of the country, incendiarism and murder committed by members of the Patriotic League become facts of daily occurrence. At the present moment the League is increasing the number of its outrages. In January, 1923, a number of members of the League entered the head-quarters of the paper-box makers of Buenos Aires, who were on strike, and wounded a member who was guarding the door.

For the development of a Fascist movement of the importance of that in Italy, one of the most fundamental elements is missing in the Argentine, namely, a larger number of small landholders and industrial petty-bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the social-economic condition of the country, and especially the extraordinary instability of the mass of agricultural workers who are scattered over immense plains, is

propitious for the actions of bands, composed of landlords, students, and the petty-bourgeoisie of the towns.

In the large towns, however, the working class is more combative. If it were only well-organized and disciplined the Fascist movement would have no chance of success against it. In any case, we do not believe that there will develop in the Argentine a large movement capable of taking over the State power. The development of a pseudo-Fascist movement would also depend upon the success of Fascism in Europe, the political and social events of which always have an immediate echo in Latin-America.

VII.

HOW TO FIGHT FASCIST TRADE UNIONISM

AN examination of the development of the Fascist movement in the various countries produces the following conclusions:

1. Fascism depends mainly upon the petty-bourgeoisie, ex-officers, and hesitating elements among the proletariat.
2. Fascism has not succeeded in attracting the broad masses of the workers.
3. The development of Fascism is encouraged by a critical economic situation.
4. The mistaken policies of the Socialist Parties with regard to the peasants has driven them towards Fascism.
5. The organization by the Fascisti of the middle class, and of a certain number of the workers, is to a great extent the result of the disillusionment produced by the policies of the reformists.
6. Wherever the workers appear united and determined, Fascism grows with difficulty.

The first measure to take against Fascism is the formation of the proletarian United Front. The propaganda in favor of this slogan should now be carried on with greater energy than ever before. Against the capitalist offensive, of which Fascism is but one of the manifestations, the united front of the working class is an absolute necessity.

There are no conditions more favorable for the development of Fascism than the enfeeblement of working-class forces. The formation of the United Front would cause re-accession of confidence among the workers, the unions would find themselves strengthened and would regain that prestige which they had partly lost because of the defeatist policies of the reformists.

If we aid in the immediate demands and struggles of the workers, the expansion of Fascism will become difficult, as its propaganda will then find but little response among the workers. The most immediate duty which must be imposed upon the revolutionary unionists is to work among the masses.

It is especially in the factories that the most profitable work can be carried on. It is there that the Fascisti make the most dangerous attempts to demoralize the workers and to break their faith in their class organizations. In this respect, the experience of Italy is con-

clusive. In spite of the violence of their attacks, the Fascisti have not succeeded, even after their seizure of power, to gain the leadership of the factory councils.

The revolutionary elements should carry on active propaganda in the factories and shops, unmasking the spies who pose as workers, and exposing them for what they really are: the mercenary agents of the bourgeoisie. These provocateurs in the factories will do their utmost to organize Fascist unions. Such attempts should be combatted energetically by all means. In those cases where, despite the efforts of the revolutionists, Fascist unions are created, one should endeavor to penetrate them in order to transform them from within. The experience of Russia is significant in this regard. We can recall the fate of the police-controlled trade unions founded by Zubartoff, which were turned into instruments of the class struggle by the revolutionists.

In Italy, even those workers who are nominally Fascisti, carrying cards in the Mussolini trade unions, go on strike and compel the Fascist leaders to go with them. This task is all the more easy because, as we have seen, the influence of Fascism on the industrial masses is almost nil.

But this is not sufficient. Even if we may check the efforts of the Fascisti to organize their own unions, they can still destroy our own organizations by violent means. The working class must organize everywhere against this danger. The most effective means of combatting the armed Fascist bands, besides the formation of the United Front, is the creation of the Proletarian Hundreds (fighting units for self-defense). These must be organized from among the masses of the workers. In some places there has appeared the tendency to form these self-defense groups on the basis of workers belonging to a particular party. Thus the German Social-Democrats propose the creation of workers' guards composed only of members of their political organizations. This tendency must be energetically fought against. The self-defense organizations must be composed of workers belonging to all parties, as well as of non-party workers. Without this, no mass action would be possible, as there would be no means of bringing the whole working masses into the struggle against Fascism.

In every country a central leadership should be created, in charge of the direction and co-ordination of the struggle. This central body should also be composed of persons of all shades of opinion in the working class movement. Besides the organization of self-defense,

these bodies will carry on wide agitation by means of public meetings and the distribution of literature.

THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST FASCISM

Above all the revolutionary trade unions of all countries should devote their energy to the fulfillment of the conditions of the Frankfurt International Conference, and a most active campaign must be carried on, in order to get the various industrial international federations to follow the way pointed out by the International Transport Workers' Conference at Berlin. The latter gathering, composed of leading officials and representatives of the International Transport Workers' (Amsterdam), and of representatives of the Transport Workers adhering to the Red International (Moscow), adopted the following manifesto:

AGAINST FASCISM

To the Transport Workers, Railway Workers and Seamen of all Countries!

Comrades:—

The representatives of the International Transport Workers' Federation and the All-Russian Railway Workers' Seamen's and Transport Workers' Unions (the latter having a mandate from all the rest of the Transport Workers' organizations standing on the basis of the Red International of Labor Unions), convened in conference on the 23rd and 24th of May, 1923, in Berlin, urgently call attention to the serious dangers which threaten the Transport Workers, as well as the whole of the Labor Movement, from the side of Fascism and Reaction.

In Italy, under the Fascist dictatorship, Trade Unions have been forcibly dissolved, their funds confiscated, their buildings destroyed, the labor press suppressed and leaders and members of workers' organizations arrested. All working class organizations which challenge capitalism are subjected to the severest persecution.

In Yugoslavia, in Italy, Spain and Bavaria as well as in the rest of Europe, the danger threatening the working class movement from the side of armed Reaction grows daily. Capitalism, shaken to its foundations by wars and armed peace, shrinks at no form of barbarity for its defense. The White Terror in Hungary, the Fascist tyranny in Italy, the mobilization of special constables in England, are all phases of the International Class Struggle.

Fascism is forming its shock-troops from the military-trained bourgeois youth, from the Russian White Guard emigrants, from the impoverished and desperate middle class and even out of the backward sections of the workers. These shock-troops of the bourgeoisie will be employed as instruments for strike-breaking and for terrorizing the militant working masses.

The Transport Workers of all countries must take up the defensive against these dangers threatening them from Fascism and Reaction, by systematic counter-measures and solidarity among themselves as well as with the organized workers in other industries.

As the unity of the Trade Union movement is a prerequisite to the defeat of Fascism, the conference held in Berlin between the I. T. F. and the All-Russian Transport Workers' Unions has decided, with all emphasis, to work for the setting up of the United Front of the Proletariat. The conference turns to the Transport Workers and also to the whole working class of all countries and appeals to them to put an end to all petty strife, to establish the unity of the Trade Union movement and thus undertake the first step for the systematic and ruthless struggle against Fascism and World Reaction.

The danger is great. Fascism is becoming more and more one of the most fearful weapons of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Against this movement it is necessary immediately to mobilize all forces. Otherwise it will be too late and the power of Fascism will for a long time exceed the forces of the organized proletariat. The greatest determination is necessary in the defensive struggle against the armed class enemy.

Transport Workers of all countries!

The power and importance of your organization is great. Therefore the responsibility which lies upon you is also great. It is up to you, therefore, by determined struggle, to lead yourselves and the whole working class to victory. You have a decisive part to play in the struggle against Fascism and Reaction.

Transport Workers! Comrades!

Our conference which is of great importance for the whole of the working class has passed important resolutions. It now lies with you to convert these resolutions into deeds:

1. To carry on an unwearied and systematic propaganda in the press and through meetings among the working masses in order to enlighten them as to the character of Fascism as a class weapon of the bourgeoisie.

2. To make use of all given opportunities, including the parliamentary tribune for the struggle against Fascism.

3. To oppose the direct action of Fascism with the direct action of the working class, the armed attack of the Fascisti with the armed defensive action of the proletariat.

4. To organize systematically a watch over the movements of Fascist Bands and the transport of munitions by Special Control Committees at the railway centres and docks.

5. To establish connections for this purpose with all labor organizations concerned in the question (Trade Unions, political parties, co-operative societies, etc.).

6. To devote special attention to the work of enlightenment among the backward and unorganized sections of the Transport Workers, in order to hinder the possibility of these being used as tools against their own class brothers. This work of enlightenment is to be conducted within the Fascist trade unions themselves, so that their proletarian elements are brought back to the class struggle.

Transport Workers! Comrades!

See to the carrying out of these decisions!

Down with Fascism!

Down with Reaction!

Down with Capitalism!

Long live the United Front of the Transport Workers of all countries!

For the Delegation of the International Transport Workers:

Robert Williams, Chairman.

Edo Fimmen, Secretary.

For the Delegation of the All-Russian Unions of Transport Workers, Railway Workers and Seamen, empowered by the Transport Workers Unions standing on the platform of the RILU:

A. Andreyev. G. Atchkanov. A. Sadovsky. A. Lozovsky.

Since the adoption of this United Front manifesto, some of the reformist leaders have been attempting to sabotage the decisions. Their efforts to hinder the effective struggle against Fascism must be pitilessly exposed to the working masses.

Finally, while not forgetting that Fascism is a danger of international gravity, the revolutionary unions of all countries must not forget that their immediate and most important task is that of crushing the only Fascism which is at present triumphant: that of Italy. By the formation of the United Front, by the application, in all branches of industry, of the decisions of the Transport Workers' Conference in Berlin, by the practical fulfillment of the Frankfurt decisions, this end may be attained.

Militants!

Help to unite Labor's forces against the menace of Fascism.

—□—
This pamphlet should be in the hands of every worker.

—□—
Every local union should order copies for its entire membership. See that this is done.

—□—
Liberal commissions paid to agents.
Be our representative in your town.

—□—
RATES (Postage Prepaid)

Single Copies - - - 15 cents per copy
Orders of 10 to 200 - 10 cents per copy

—□—
SPECIAL RATES TO AGENTS

ALL ORDERS PAYABLE IN ADVANCE

—
Send Remittances to the

**Trade Union Educational
League**

106 N. La Salle St.

Chicago, Illinois

READ
THE LABOR HERALD

*A Constructive, Militant
Monthly Labor Magazine*

WM. Z. FOSTER, Editor

Subscription \$1.50 per year

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE
Trade Union Educational
League

106 N. La Salle St.

Chicago, Illinois